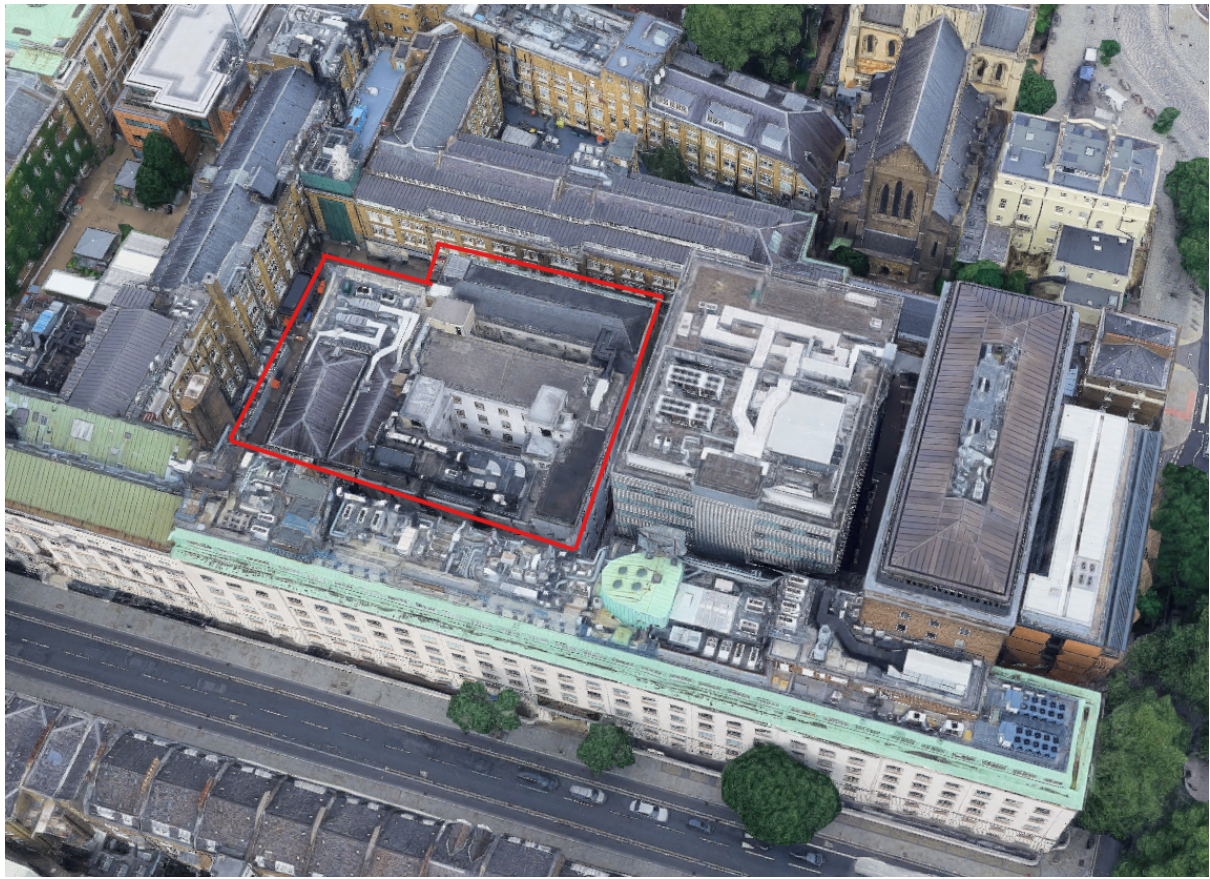


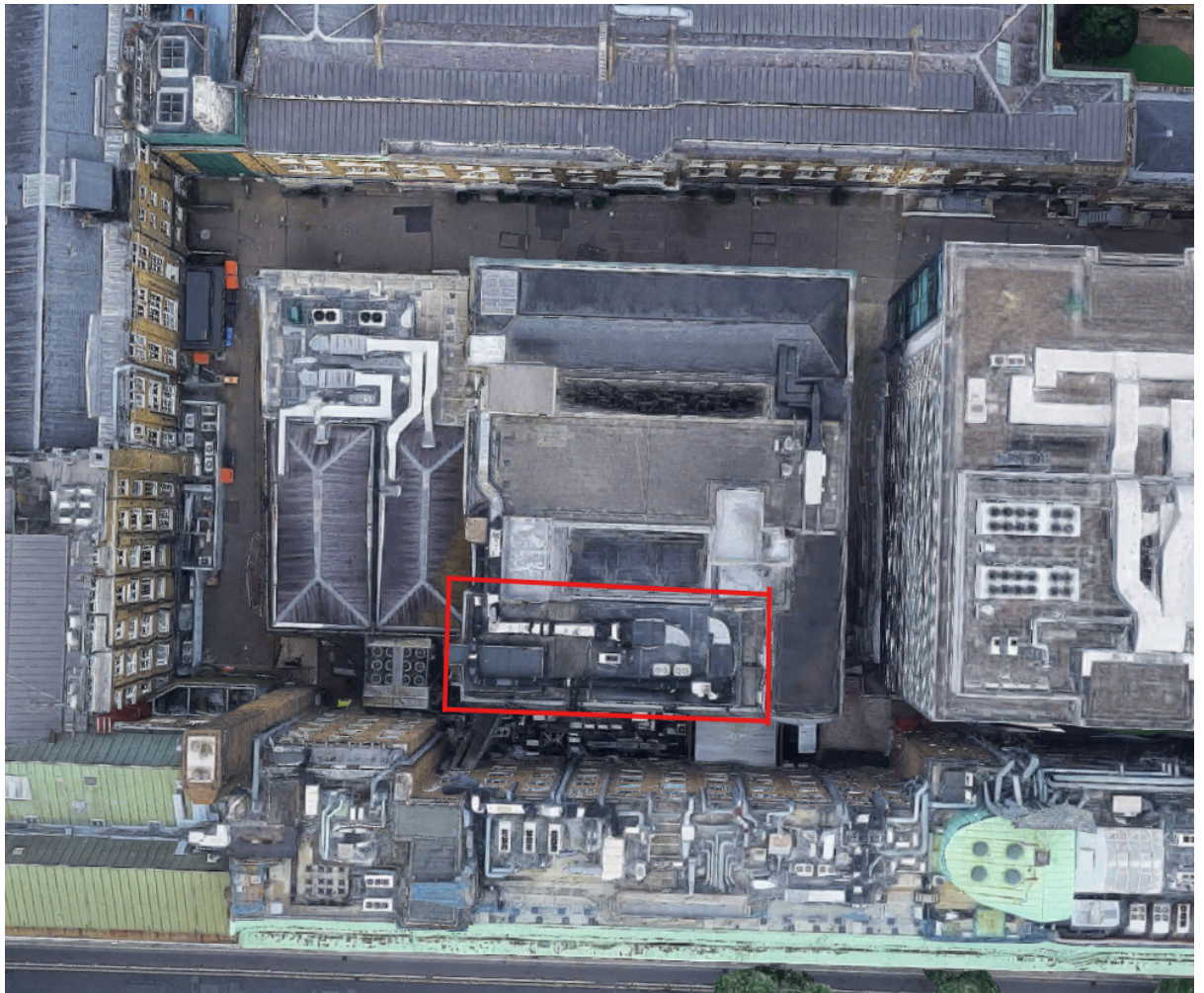
UCL DMS Watson Building



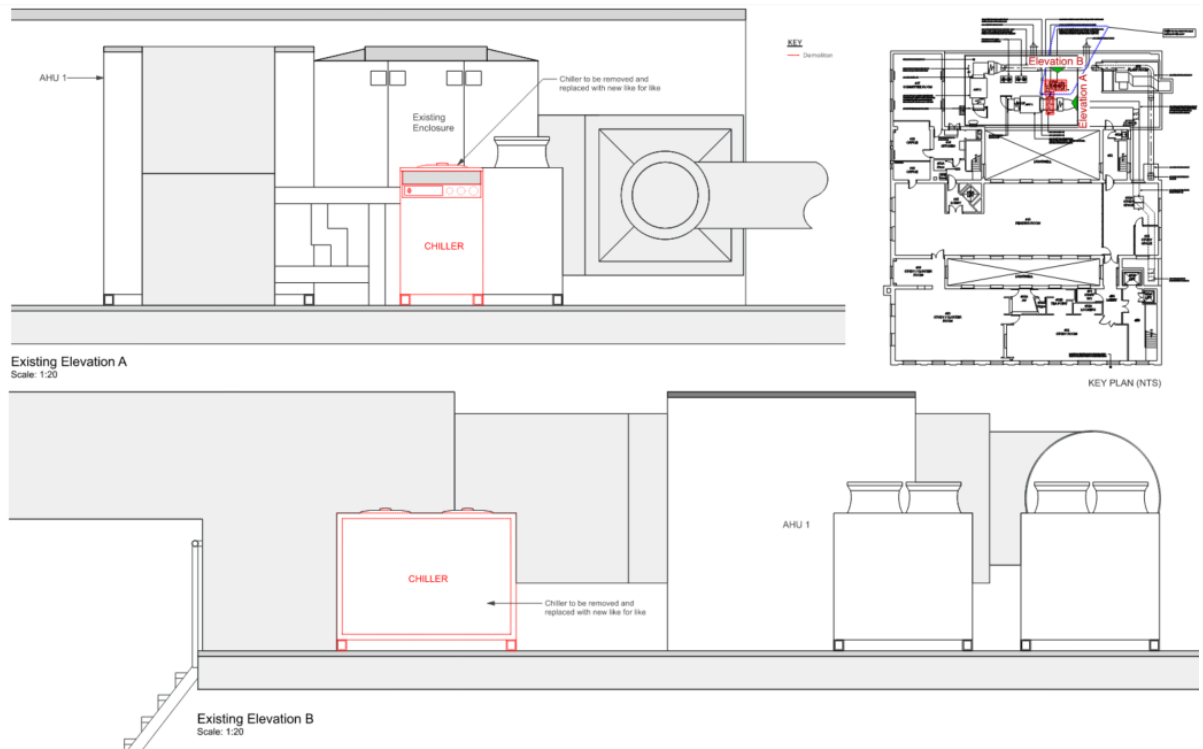
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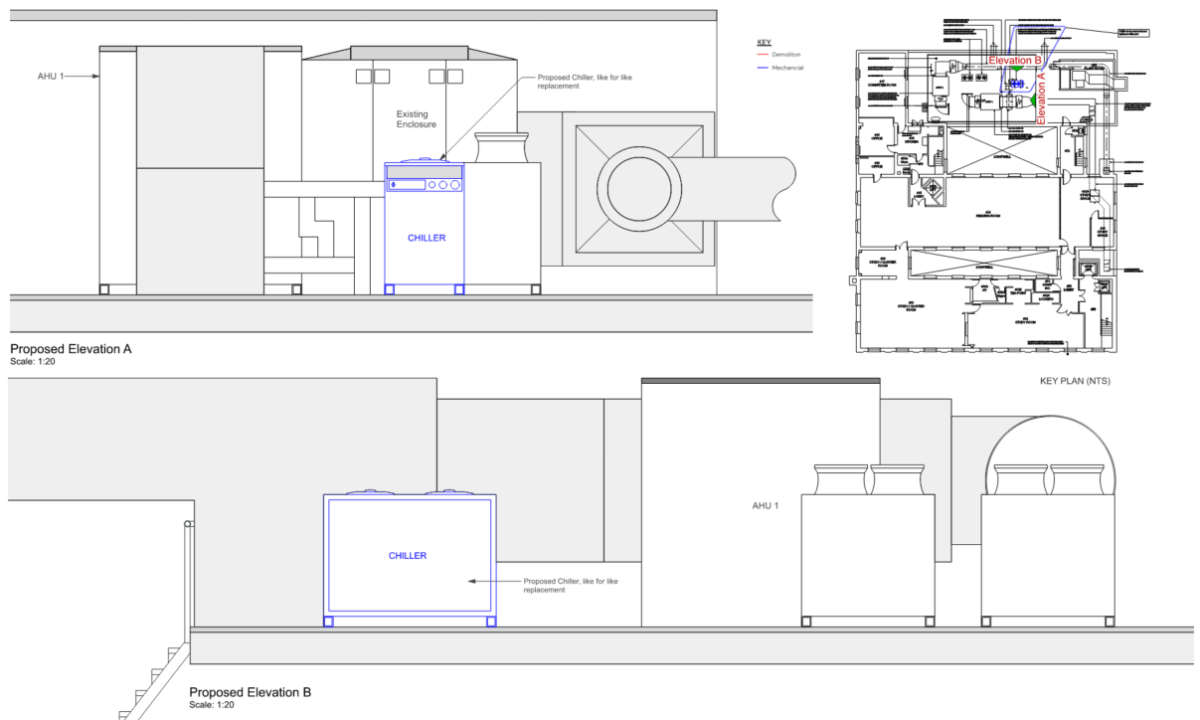
1. Aerial photo of the site with Gower St to the front



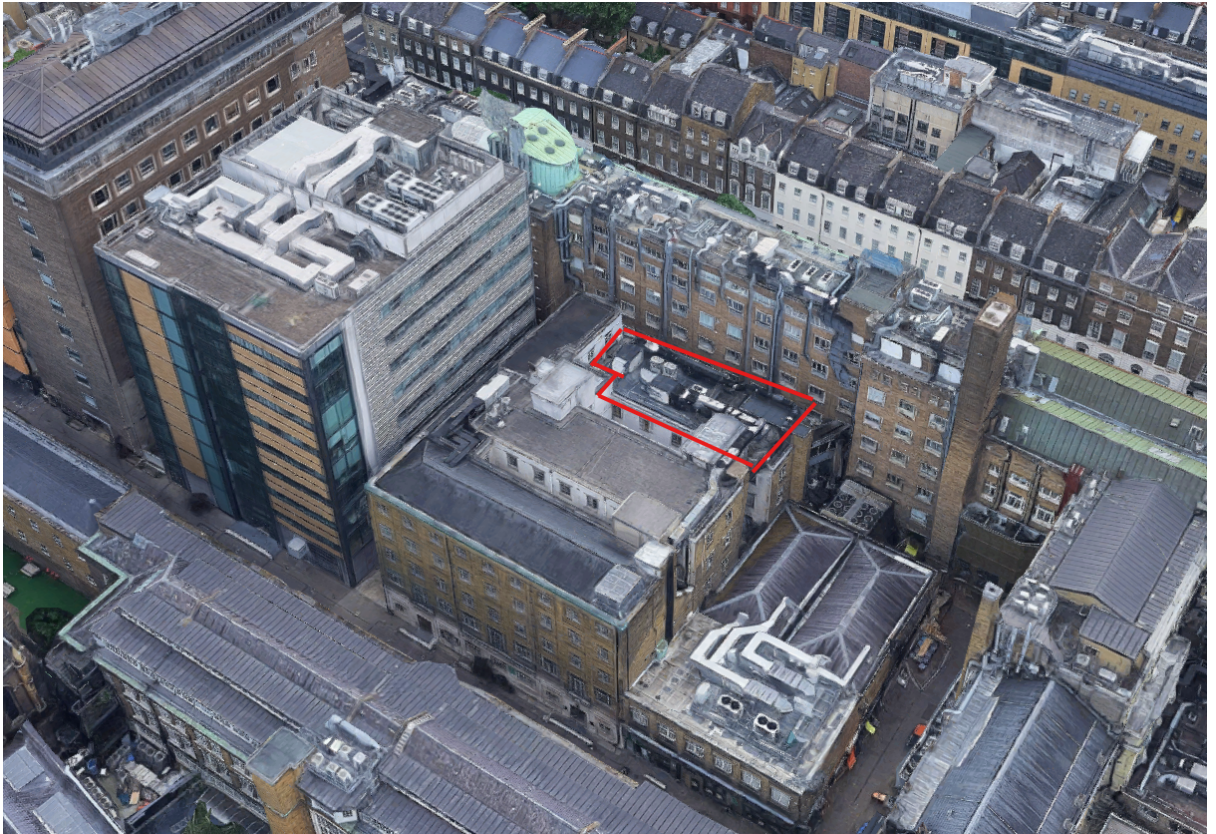
2. Top-down photo showing the plant area in red



3. Existing plan, section and elevation



4. Proposed plan, section and elevation



5. View from the rear of the building (Malet PI side) showing the plant area in red and the surrounding buildings

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	24/07/2025
		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	06/07/2025
Officer			Application Number	
Edward Hodgson			2025/2294/P	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
UCL DMS Watson Building Malet Place London WC1E 6BT			See draft decision notice	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal				
Removal and installation of external chiller and associated alterations at roof level				
Recommendation:	Grant conditional planning permission			
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice			
Informatives:				
Consultations				
Summary of consultation:	Site notices were displayed near to the site on the 11/06/2025 (consultation end date 05/07/2025). The development was also advertised in the local press on the 12/06/2025 (consultation end date 06/07/2025).			
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	01
Summary of consultation responses:	One letter of objection was received from the Gordon Mansions Residents Association, which can be summarised as below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Concern that the acoustic report does not include Gordon MansionsConcern about the existing chiller being installed without planning permission and how it will impact on background noise levels that are used to calculated noise impacts in the acoustic report.The upper floors of Gordon Mansions experience noise from the roof of UCL buildings nearby. Units should be turned to face the other way. <u>Officer's Response</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A Noise Impact Assessment Report has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Team. The report states that noise from the new unit would be at least 10dB below the existing nighttime background noise levels at the nearest receptor which are the rear windows of the Darwin Building on the east side of Gower Street, 10m away from the proposed unit. It would also be 22dB below the nighttime noise levels at the student accommodation on the west side of Gower Street which is 45m away from the site. It is noted that the nearest receptor at Gordon Mansions is approx. 100m away from the proposed unit. Further discussion can be found in section 3 of the report. Permission has been granted for previous plant equipment at fifth floor roof level.			
Bloomsbury CAAC:	The BCAAC were invited for consultation however no comments or objections were received.			

Site Description

The application site is a five/six storey brick building located within the main UCL Bloomsbury Campus, accessed off Malet Place. Malet Place is a largely pedestrianised road within the campus which is accessed off Torrington Place. The building sits lower than its neighbours to the west (the Darwin Building facing onto Gower Street) and south (the engineering building on Malet Place). The building is used as the science library for the university and is in education use (Class F1(a)).

The application site is not listed but is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

Application Site:

2015/2975/P - Installation of plant (air handling unit, condenser and ductwork) at 5th floor roof level – **Granted – 14/07/2015**

2003/2055/P - The installation of two air blast coolers on the roof of the DMS Watson Building – **Granted – 4/02/2004**

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The London Plan (2021)

Camden Local Plan (2017)

- **A1** Managing the impact of development
- **A4** Noise and vibration
- **A3** Biodiversity
- **D1** Design
- **D2** Heritage
- **CC2** Adapting to climate change

Camden Planning Guidance

- CPG Amenity (2021)
- CPG Design (2021)
- CPG Energy Efficiency and Adaptation (2021)

Conservation Statements:

- Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and management strategy (2011)

Draft Camden Local Plan

The Council has published a new Draft Camden Local Plan (incorporating Site Allocations) for consultation (DCLP). The DCLP is a material consideration and can be taken into account in the determination of planning applications which has limited weight at this stage. The weight that can be given to it will increase as it progresses towards adoption (anticipated 2026).

Assessment

1. Proposal

1.1. Planning permission is sought for the installation of a new chiller unit at roof level, as a like-for-like replacement of an existing chiller unit in this location. It would have the same proportions and be of a similar design to the existing. Associated cabling and pipework would be installed and would follow the route of the existing units into the building. The unit would be located towards the western side of the roof, where there is a variety of plant equipment in situ.

1.2. The principal planning considerations for the proposal are:

- Design and Heritage
- Amenity
- Sustainability
- Biodiversity

2. Design and Heritage

2.1. The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. The following considerations contained within policy D1 are relevant to the application: development should respect local context and character; comprise details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character; and respond to natural features. Policy D2 'Heritage' states that in order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will not permit development within conservation area that fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that conservation area.

2.2. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement advises that alterations and extensions to existing buildings including the addition of prominent roof level plant can have a detrimental impact to the character and appearance of the area.

2.3. The unit would be located at roof level where there is already a considerable amount of plant equipment and is essentially a like-for-like replacement for a unit which has been in situ for some time. Given the height of surrounding buildings, especially the Darwin and engineering buildings, it would have very limited visibility in views, especially in those from the public realm with no visibility from Gower Street and Malet Place. As such, it would not impact significantly from the overall appearance of the host building or the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

2.4. It is considered that the proposed plant unit would not cause a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the host property and would preserve the special character of the Bloomsbury conservation area. Special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. The proposal would be in accordance with policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

3. Amenity

3.1. Policy A1 seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission to development that would not harm the amenity of residents. This includes factors such as privacy, outlook, implications to natural light, artificial light spill, odour and fumes as well as impacts caused from the construction phase of development. Policy A4 seeks to ensure that residents are not adversely impacts upon by virtue of noise or vibrations.

3.2. A Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken, which has established the existing background noise levels in the vicinity around the application site. The report has identified the nearest sensitive receptors as being the office and study rooms on the rear of the Darwin Building (10m away from the proposal) and the nearest residential receptor as the student accommodation on the east side of Gower Street (45m away). Compliance with noise standards at the nearest

receptor (the Darwin Building) would ensure compliance at all the other receptors. The lowest background noise levels (during nighttime) at the nearest receptor in the survey was recorded as 60dB. The Local Plan requires noise levels from plant to be no higher than 10dB below the background noise level, i.e. 50dB in this case. The report states that the noise from the unit when operational would be 50dB at the nearest receptor at the Darwin Building and 22dB at the nearest residential receptor on Gower Street. This demonstrates that noise from the unit would comply with the Local Plan requirements and would be at least 10dB below the existing background noise levels at nighttime. Any receptors further away from the site would therefore comply with the policy requirements.

3.3. The Noise Impact Assessment has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Team who have deemed it to be acceptable subject to conditions. The conditions, which would require the noise levels of the plant to be below ambient noise levels, and for anti-vibration measures to be taken, are duly attached on the decision.

3.4. It is considered that the proposed development is not considered to lead to a significant impact upon the amenities of any neighbouring resident. The development is thus considered to be in accordance with planning policies A1 and A4 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

4. Sustainability

4.1. The existing plant unit serving the building is no longer fit for purpose. The unit would provide the same function as the existing plant, although it would be a more modern unit which is more energy efficient and environmentally friendly than the existing. The active cooling is essentially being replaced and upgraded instead of being increased. Therefore, the active cooling is considered acceptable in this instance. The proposals are thus in general accordance with policy CC2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

5. Biodiversity

5.1. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was introduced on 12th February 2024 and makes a statutory requirement for all development to provide a net increase of 10% for biodiversity, unless it meets the criteria for exemption. As the development does not impact 25sqm of on-site habitat or 5m of on-site linear habitats the proposal is exempt for BNG requirements. Informatives are attached to the decision notice to further explain the requirements of BNG.

6. Recommendation

6.1. Grant conditional Planning Permission

The decision to refer an application to Planning Committee lies with the Director of Regeneration and Planning. Following the Members Briefing panel on Monday 4th August 2025, nominated members will advise whether they consider this application should be reported to the Planning Committee. For further information, please go to www.camden.gov.uk and search for 'Members Briefing'.

Application ref: 2025/2294/P
Contact: Edward Hodgson
Tel: 020 7974 8186
Email: Edward.Hodgson@camden.gov.uk
Date: 25 July 2025

Development Management
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE
Phone: 020 7974 4444
planning@camden.gov.uk
www.camden.gov.uk

Newmark
One Fitzroy, 6 Mortimer Street
London
W1T 3JJ

DRAFT

Dear Sir/Madam

DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Full Planning Permission Granted

Address:
UCL DMS Watson Building
Malet Place
London
WC1E 6BT

DECISION

Proposal:
Removal and installation of external chiller and associated alterations at roof level

Drawing Nos: Site Location Plan 240080-SW08-1101 P4, 240080-SW08-1210 P01, 240080-SW08-1500 P01, Design and Access Statement, Covering Letter, Environmental Noise Assessment (Clear Acoustic Design 28/03/2025)

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant permission subject to the following condition(s):

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Site Location Plan 240080-SW08-1101 P4, 240080-SW08-1210 P01, 240080-SW08-1500 P01, Design and Access Statement, Covering Letter, Environmental Noise Assessment (Clear Acoustic Design 28/03/2025)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 3 The external noise level emitted from plant, machinery or equipment at the development with specified noise mitigation hereby approved shall be lower than the typical existing background noise level by at least 10dBA, by 15dBA where the source is tonal, as assessed according to BS4142:2014 at the nearest and/or most affected noise sensitive premises, with machinery operating at maximum capacity and thereafter be permanently retained.

Reason: To ensure that the amenity of occupiers of the development site/ surrounding premises is not adversely affected by noise from mechanical installations/ equipment in accordance with the requirements of policies A1 and A4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

- 4 Prior to use, machinery, plant or equipment at the development shall be mounted with proprietary anti-vibration isolators and fan motors shall be vibration isolated from the casing and adequately silenced and maintained as such.

Reason: To ensure that the amenity of occupiers of the development site and surrounding premises is not adversely affected by vibration in accordance with the requirements of policies A1 and A4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

Informative(s):

- 1 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts that cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (tel: 020-7974 6941).
- 2 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Informative (1/3):
The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("1990 Act") is that planning permission granted in England is subject to the condition ("the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:
(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The local planning authority (LPA) that would approve any Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) (if required) is London Borough of Camden.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are summarised below, but you should check the legislation yourself and ensure you meet the statutory requirements.

Based on the information provided, this will not require the approval of a BGP before development is begun because it is below the de minimis threshold.

3 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Informative (2/3):

+ Summary of transitional arrangements and exemptions for biodiversity gain condition

The following are provided for information and may not apply to this permission:

1. The planning application was made before 12 February 2024.
2. The planning permission is retrospective.
3. The planning permission was granted under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the original (parent) planning permission was made or granted before 12 February 2024.
4. The permission is exempt because of one or more of the reasons below:
 - It is not "major development" and the application was made or granted before 2 April 2024, or planning permission is granted under section 73 and the original (parent) permission was made or granted before 2 April 2024.
 - It is below the de minimis threshold (because it does not impact an onsite priority habitat AND impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat with biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat).
 - The application is a Householder Application.
 - It is for development of a "Biodiversity Gain Site".
 - It is Self and Custom Build Development (for no more than 9 dwellings on a site no larger than 0.5 hectares and consists exclusively of dwellings which are Self-Build or Custom Housebuilding).
 - It forms part of, or is ancillary to, the high-speed railway transport network (High Speed 2).

4 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Informative (3/3):

+ Irreplaceable habitat:

If the onsite habitat includes Irreplaceable Habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements. In addition to information about minimising adverse impacts on the habitat, the BGP must include information on compensation for any impact on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat. The LPA can only approve a BGP if satisfied that the impact on the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

+ The effect of section 73(2D) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990

If planning permission is granted under section 73, and a BGP was approved in relation to the previous planning permission ("the earlier BGP"), the earlier BGP may be regarded as approved for the purpose of discharging the biodiversity gain condition on this permission. It will be regarded as approved if the conditions attached (and so the permission granted) do not affect both the post-development value of the onsite habitat and any arrangements made to compensate irreplaceable habitat as specified in the earlier BGP.

+ Phased development

In the case of phased development, the BGP will be required to be submitted to and approved by the LPA before development can begin (the overall plan), and before each phase of development can begin (phase plans). The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition in phased development are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024.

- 5 This approval does not authorise the use of the public highway. Any requirement to use the public highway, such as for hoardings, temporary road closures and suspension of parking bays, will be subject to approval of relevant licence from the Council's Streetworks Authorisations & Compliance Team, 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No 020 7974 4444). Licences and authorisations need to be sought in advance of proposed works. Where development is subject to a Construction Management Plan (through a requirement in a S106 agreement), no licence or authorisation will be granted until the Construction Management Plan is approved by the Council.
- 6 All works should be conducted in accordance with the Camden Minimum Requirements - a copy is available on the Council's website (search for 'Camden Minimum Requirements' at www.camden.gov.uk) or contact the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team, 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444)

Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You must secure the approval of the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team prior to undertaking such activities outside these hours.

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. The council publishes its adopted policies online, along with detailed Camden Planning Guidance. It also provides advice on the website for submitting applications and offers a pre-application advice service.

You can find advice about your rights of appeal at:

<https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision>.

Yours faithfully

Chief Planning Officer